



GUIDE ON ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY

Course 2019/20



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Introduction

The introduction, in the UCAM Catholic University of Murcia, of official degrees adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), regulated by the Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, makes it necessary to develop specific norms that answer to the demands of society, which is constantly changing, by taking into account the diversity of the students and their disabilities.

The UCAM Catholic University of Murcia is aware of this, and it has inspired its official degrees in the following principles, which are expressed in the Royal Decree 1393/2007:

- The respect for the fundamental rights and for the equality between men and women.
- The respect and the fostering of the Human Rights and of the accessibility principles: Equality of opportunities, no discrimination and universal accessibility of persons with disability.
- The typical values of the culture of peace and the democratic values.

This *Guide for Orientation, Attention to Diversity and Disability* is based on the above mentioned principles and it aims at defining the general framework that must be applied to students who have special educative needs.

The University has invested a lot in the attention to diversity and to disabled persons ever since its foundation, with the Assessment and Psychological Counselling Service and the Legal Service (<https://www.ucam.edu/servicios/seap>), apart from creating the Chair Montoro Alemán for the social and occupational inclusion of disabled persons in the year 2012/2013, in collaboration with the GMP Foundation, which accepts students with intellectual disabilities in the University, inside the CAPACITAS programme (<http://capacitas.ucam.edu/>).

We see diversity and disability as a problem that has to do with perspectives. All persons are different and, in various occasions, the environments and the mentalities represent the biggest obstacles to overcome. Specifically, disability must be seen as a state of functioning of the person. For this reason, the University wants to take steps to meet the educative needs that the students in these circumstances might have.

Attention to diversity and disability

In the light of the deep changes in the new degrees as compared to the ones of the previous university organisation, in order to meet the challenge of diversity and disability in the University, the Organic Law 4/2007 of 12 April, on Universities, which modifies the Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, and the Legislative Royal Decree 1/2013, of 29 November in its article 20, which approves the Consolidated Text of the General Law on the rights of persons with disability and their social inclusion have been taken into account in the following points:

- The equality of opportunities and the non-discrimination for reasons of sex, race, religion or disability or any other condition or personal or social circumstance in the access to university, access to centres, continuation of studies and exercise of one's own academic rights.

The access, admission and registration criteria, as well as the *Regulation on Continuation of Studies* of the official degrees of the Catholic University of Murcia grant its compliance.

- The guarantee of adaptation of the system of calls for exams established with a general nature, with the possibility to request the increase in the number of calls (that the universities must accept), in compliance with the corresponding rules on continuation of studies, as long as it compensates their difficulty, without compromising the

required level. The tests will be adapted, when needed, to the characteristics of the disability of the person concerned.

The UCAM Catholic University of Murcia has established, in its *Regulation on Continuation of Studies* (art. 13) the conditions of attention to the students with special academic needs and/or disabilities, in the following terms:

1. Those students whose disability severely hampers the adaptation to the system of calls for exam established in general will be considered as students with special academic needs.
2. The term disability refers to that situation that is the result of the interaction between permanently impaired persons and any type of barrier that limits or impedes their full participation in society, on equal terms as other persons (*Legislative Royal Decree 1/2013, of 29 November, which approves the Consolidated Text of the General Law on rights of persons with disabilities and on their social inclusion. Article 2. Definitions*).
3. The students who experiment and prove the previously described conditions can request the extension of the number of calls established in the general regulation on continuation of studies in one and for a single subject, as long as this compensates their difficulty, without compromising the required level.
4. The assessment tests will be adapted, in compliance with this *Guide for Orientation, Attention to Diversity and Disability*, as long as this is academically possible, to the characteristics of the disability of the person concerned.
5. The University will assess each specific case through the Assessment and Psychological Counselling Service and the Legal Service, and it will take the adequate measures.
6. A necessary and essential requirement consists in the fact that the student must prove the disability

at the time of the ordinary registration (July/September).

It is hard to generically talk about the needs that derive from the attention to diversity and disability due to their variety and peculiarity. For this reason, the educative needs will be analysed individually and the adaptation will be personalised.

Services of attention to diversity and disability

The *Services of Attention to Diversity and Disability* give information, advises and support to the students of the UCAM and they give them the assistance and the resources adapted to their needs as university students.

The services of the UCAM which are available are the following: The *Assessment and Psychological Counselling Service* (SEAP) and the *Legal Service* (<http://www.ucam.edu/servicios/seap>). Both services act in an integrated manner and their functions are:

- To provide direct attention to the entire university community.
- To promote positive attitudes towards diversity and disability in the university field.
- To promote, among the different services and university departments, the educative and social integration of students with specific educative needs and/or with disability.
- To promote awareness, training, orientation and research actions for the integration of students with specific educative needs and/or disability.
- To make available the material, personal and functional support resources for the educative and social integration.
- Involvement of volunteers.
- Development of actions for the social and occupational integration.

The services that they provide:

Psychopedagogical counselling:

The Service of Assessment and Psychopedagogical Counselling (SEAP) is run by professionals of the area of Educational and Professional Orientation of the Department of Education and by the professionals of the Area of Personality, Assessment and Psychological Treatment of the Psychology Department of this University. This service is free for the entire university community (teaching and research staff, administration and services staff and students).

Its mission is to contribute to the well-being of the members of the university community through the counsel and the psychological assessment of all the persons that need it. Its functions are:

- To conduct personalised psychological interviews.
- Psychological assessment.
- Psychological counselling.
- Information and referral to specialised professionals.
- Collaboration in the continuous training of the tutors.

The attention given is individualised and personalised. The confidentiality and the anonymity of the consultation is granted and it is necessary to prove the link with the UCAM to request it through two means:

- Personally: When the concerned person needs some information, clarification, consultation or explanation regarding a situation.
- Through the personal tutor. The student can contact his/her tutor first. After knowing the circumstance of the student, the tutor can refer him/her to this service. The referral will always be made with the approval of the student.

Legal counselling:

The Legal Service of the University, included in the Department of Human Resources, informs and advises on the legislation that protects the rights of the disabled persons, the modality to receive public aids and other services provided by the Administration at the service of those communities.

Its functions are:

- Legal counselling.
- Technical and legal advice on disability.
- Technical and legal advice on university regulation.
- Rights and duties of the members of the university community.

Curricular adaptations in the University.

The curricular adaptation in an academic and teaching performance that aims at meeting the learning needs for the acquisition of the competences by the students who require it. The curricular adaptation will always be personalised.

The principles of adaptation that regulate the University are the following:

1. To accept the Higher Education focused on the student as a continuation of his/her personal development.
2. The teaching and the learning are based on the development of capacities and abilities for the acquisition of competences.
3. The different capacities are not fixed determining factors but they are situations which can be managed in the search for the well-being of the person.
We are all different.

Certain adaptations can simplify the personal and academic development of the student registered in the University. For example, the use of the Braille system, the adapted

exams, the complementary tests, the extra time for the execution of activities and the conclusion of works or the fact of providing materials, personalised tutoring sessions and/or additional calls.

1. Visual disability.

Visual disability is a general term which includes various types of visual problems and difficulties. Legally, the terms legal blindness and vision impairment include all the persons whose vision presents at least one of the following conditions in both eyes:

- a) Visual acuity equal or inferior to 0'1 (1/10 of the Wecker scale) obtained with the best possible optical correction.
- b) Visual field reduced to 10 or less degrees.

Visual disability implies a loss in the perceptive system and in the access to the information of the environment. In this sense, sight is essential and it implies 80% of the information that surrounds us. The total or partial loss needs adaptation. Persons with these types of difficulties mainly use auditory and tactile information to know things and establish relations.

Given the variability of the visual pathologies, we can't refer to common characteristics for all the persons who suffer from a visual deficit, but there are similarities in the modality that they have to interact with the environment and to access to information.

Difficulties they may have

They have difficulties with personal autonomy, with the knowledge of the physical and natural medium of the university, with the comprehension of abstract terms that are associated with sight.

They can also have difficulties with the access to information, with spatial and temporal

orientation, mobility, printed texts and written information. The Braille system requires more time and, in places with noise pollution (pergola, classrooms, temple, cafeteria, etc.) there can be a loss of auditory information.

Recommendations

- To always identify oneself when addressing a person with such disability, so that he/she can recognise the professor clearly.
- To avoid, as far as possible, the use of visual information.
- To recommend special bibliography or to select the most important texts.
- To carry out the same training activities with the proposed methodologies, whenever possible.
- To carry out the same assessment tests proposed in the subjects.
- In the exams, especially in multiple choice exams, further information on the meaning of some words that the student does not understand will be necessary.
- To always specify the exact place in which the information can be found.
- To inform the student about the structure and organisation of the classroom or of any physical space.
- To make the student sit in the first rows for a good auditory perception.
- In the texts, the font Arial, in a non-bold typeface and in lower case must be preferably used. The capital letters shall be used for the titles.
- The use of technical aids shall be allowed in class.
- If the information given in the class is visual, it shall be given in a different format, whenever possible.

Adaptations

- ✓ Provided that the disability seriously prevents them from adapting to the regime of calls generally established, these students may request an expansion of the number of calls of the general regime of continuation of studies in one and for a single subject, as long as it compensates their difficulty, without compromising the required level.
- ✓ If appropriate, the assessment test will be adapted by using largest characters or by translating it to Braille. In the last case, the student shall submit the request to the

National Organization of Spanish blind people (ONCE) at the beginning of the academic year. Otherwise, its implementation will be impossible.

- ✓ In case it is necessary, complementary and alternative tests will be made.
- ✓ 50% additional time to make the test is recommended, when needed.
- ✓ Any adapted material, guide dog or support person will be allowed into the classroom.

2. *Hearing impairment*

Hearing impairment causes difficulties in the cognitive aspects of language, which affect the expression and the social relations. Hearing impairment is compensated through written and visual information.

Difficulties they may have

- Difficulties in the comprehension of oral and written language.
- Difficulties with spatial and temporal orientation.

Recommendations

- To communicate with a person with hearing impairment, let her/him know through a gesture, a sign or by touching him/her.
- The communication shall be made face to face.
- Avoid talking with a chewing gum or a candy in your mouth which can hinder the understanding.
- It is necessary to verify whether the student has understood what has been told to him/her.
- Use short and simple sentences.
- The student must seat in the first rows for a better comprehension and in order to ease, whenever necessary, the lip-reading.
- The teacher shall avoid having his/her back to the students. The teacher's face must be visible. The teacher will not walk in the classroom while he/she explains a topic.
- The use of e-mails can be useful to keep the students informed and to communicate with them.

- If possible, the materials can be provided in advance.
- If the student requires it, he/she will be allowed to use of specific materials and/or materials adapted to his/her circumstances.

Adaptations

- ✓ Provided that the disability seriously impedes them from adapting to the regime of calls generally established, these students may request an expansion of the number of calls of the general regime of continuation of studies in one and for a single subject, as long as it compensates their difficulty, without compromising the required level.
- ✓ Written instructions will be provided for the different training activities and assessment tests.
- ✓ Written language skills are lower due to hearing impairment. Morphosyntactic errors will be very common, so it is recommended to pay attention to content rather than form in assessments.
- ✓ People with hearing impairment have greater difficulties with written expression and reading comprehension, therefore it is recommended, if necessary, to allow them 25% additional time to make the test.
- ✓ Any adapted material or support person will be allowed into the classroom.

3. *Motor impairment*

Motor impairment is a limitation in mobility that can be aggravated by architectural or accessibility barriers.

Difficulties they may have

- Architectural barriers.
- Accessibility barriers.

Recommendations

- To adjust the pace and speed and avoid possible pushing.
- If necessary, help to carry objects.
- If the students present difficulties in communicating, allow them time to express themselves. If language is unintelligible let the student know.
- To place the chair in a suitable and accessible place, using the brake and pulling up the footrest.
- In the classroom, the student should be placed in a space with good visibility and accessibility.
- The material for the subject must be available for the students that might need it in a computerised form (accessible websites, virtual campus), before the classes.
- If the student requires it, he/she will be allowed to use specific materials and/or materials adapted to his/her circumstances.
- Students with speech disabilities must have more time to participate.

Adaptations

- ✓ Provided that the disability seriously prevents them from adapting to the regime of calls generally established, these students may request an expansion of the number of calls of the general regime of continuation of studies in one and for a single subject, as long as it compensates their difficulty, without compromising the required level.
- ✓ Any adapted material or support person will be allowed into the classroom.
- ✓ The time of the test must be extended according to the motor difficulty.
- ✓ If required, oral examination shall be allowed.

4. *Mental disability*

Mental disability is a limitation in adaptive behaviour that can be expressed in conceptual, social and practical skills.

Difficulties they may have

- People with this disability may have difficulties in social skills and social relationships.
- The information about the social environment is often vague, inaccurate and deficient.

Recommendations

- Good eye contact is necessary.
- Their style of expression may be different, so this particularity must be respected.
- The Special Group of Tutors can be of great help for orientation and guidance during his/her time at the university.
- To enhance the skills and strengths of the student.
- If required, the materials used in class shall be provided in advance.

Adaptations

- ✓ Provided that the disability seriously prevents them from adapting to the regime of calls generally established, these students may request an expansion of the number of calls of the general regime of continuation of studies in one and for a single subject, as long as it compensates their difficulty, without compromising the required level.
- ✓ If deemed appropriate, the assessment deadlines can be made more flexible.

5. *Physical disability.*

Physical disability means an impairment of health that becomes evident on a personal, social and academic level and which decreases, depending on its severity, the development of the student.

Difficulties they may have

- Hospitalisations that make them unable to follow a sustained and steady pace.
- Occasionally, low performance due to medication.
- Related psychological problems.
- Limitations in the tasks to be carried out as a result of treatments received.
- Limitations in time.

Recommendations

- Whenever possible, carry out the same training activities under the proposed methodologies.
- It is recommended that they carry out the same assessment tests proposed in the subjects.
- Technical help in class shall be allowed for students who need it.

Adaptations

- ✓ Provided that the disability seriously prevents them from adapting to the regime of calls generally established, these students may request an expansion of the number of calls of the general regime of continuation of studies in one and for a single subject, as long as it compensates their difficulty, without compromising the required level.
- ✓ If deemed appropriate, the assessment deadlines can be made more flexible.